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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to ease the transition of the male inmate back to his family and his role as father. It was a response to the failure of the corrections system to assist inmates placed in the Community Correctional Center in a county of a southern state in participating in beneficial activities and reestablishing positive ties with family and friends before their releases. Findings from a literature review, interviews with inmates, and a needs assessment indicated that inmates wished to strengthen and/or develop skills that would assist them in becoming more effective parents. Four seminars consisting of four workshops each were offered. Each workshop focused on one topic. Topics were determined by a nonstandardized preevaluation on which inmates indicated areas of need in their parenting skills knowledge. Of 32 inmates who enrolled in the four seminars, 31 completed them. Topics covered in the various seminars included family relationships; stress management; communication skills; children and school; learning problems; and health, safety, and first aid. A parenting library was established for inmate use. Ninety selections were made available to inmates. Inmates' comments on the post-evaluations were very positive. (Appendixes include 19 references, instruments, survey results, and lists of selections in the library.) (YLB)

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Improving Parenting Skills of Incarcerated Males in a Community Correctional Center

by

Michelle L. Rinehart Reinhard

Cluster 27

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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May 2, 1991
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This practicum report was submitted by Michelle L. Rinehart Reinhard under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Date of Final Approval of Report	Richard Goldman, Ph.D., Adviser

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I would like to thank the administration and staff of the Community Correctional Center for their willingness to implement a new program. To the 31 inmates who participated, this program would not have been possible without your support.

I would also like to thank my husband, parents, and son--all of whom exemplify my ideals of family and parenting. To my family and friends, you are the best! Thanks.

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ABSTRACT

Improving Parenting Skills of Incarcerated Males in a Community Correctional Center. Reinhard, Michelle L. Rinehart, 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Parenting/Training/Correctional Rehabilitation/Correctional Education/Prison/Program Development

This practicum was designed to ease the transition of the male inmate back into his family and his role as father. Four seminars consisting of four workshops each were offered at the Community Correctional Center. A parenting library was established for inmate use. The inmates had input into the curriculum presented in the workshops.

By use of current literature, interviews, and a needs assessment, it was determined that inmates wished to strengthen and/or develop skills that would assist them in becoming more effective parents.

The results of the practicum were positive. A total of 31 inmates attended the seminars and used the parenting resources. Twenty-four of these men had children, while seven did not. The seminars were provided with minimal financial investment, supplemented the rehabilitation program, and increased community involvement.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Setting of the Practicum

The practicum was implemented in a southern state known for tourism that had an increased seasonal population during the winter months. At the time of implementation, the stable population in the county was approximately 295,000 people. Local planners estimated an increase of year-round residents of 13% over the four years following implementation.

The practicum was conducted at the local Community Correctional Center. The Community Correctional Center was a state run facility which served one county. It was built in 1981 and an addition was completed in 1983. The capacity of the center was 120 inmates. There was an average of 100 inmates in the center during the first six months of implementation and 50 during the last six months.

The Correctional Center was located on the outskirts of one of the largest cities in the county. The main structure was a brick building which served several purposes. It housed the administrative offices and reception area. There was a recreation room for inmates just inside the front doors. The dining facility was also

in the main building. There were 40 rooms for inmates with three inmates occupying each room. A weight training area and basketball court were located behind the main structure. The open picnic area in front of the center was used for visitations by friends and families of the inmates.

People Involved in the Practicum

There were several groups of people who made this project possible. The purpose of the practicum was to assist the inmates and their families. The inmates at the Community Correctional Center were incarcerated males over the age of 21. The inmates had less than 24 months of their sentences left to serve. They were chosen to participate in a work release program. It was estimated that while 20 of the 100 men in the program at that time were married, 70 of the 100 men had children under the age of 18.

There was a full time staff of 19 employed by the state. In light of the reductions in money available for inmate education and rehabilitation, the administration of the Community Correctional Center was enthusiastic about the addition of a program that would not impact on its budget.

The Citizens Advisory Committee actively participated in this project, serving as liaison between the center and local community. The Advisory Committee coordinated

projects inmates could undertake for the community. It facilitated inmate participation in community support groups and coordinated the programs offered to the inmates. In addition, the committee oversaw pre-release orientations and established support groups.

Information about the Writer of the Practicum

The writer was a middle school teacher in the exceptional student education program for the local public school district. The writer was a Local Educational Agent for the district exceptional student education department. Certified by the state department of education, the writer was a peer reviewer and expert witness. The writer was a volunteer with the Citizens Advisory Committee for the local Community Correctional Center.

The educational background of the writer was varied and included a B.A. degree in elementary education and a M.A. degree in education with specializations in specific learning disabilities, guidance, and counseling. The writer held several state educational certifications including elementary education (kindergarten through sixth grade) and specific learning disabilities (kindergarten through twelfth grade). Additionally, the writer was certified by the state in the areas of guidance and counseling.

It should also be noted that the writer has been guest speaker for Health and Rehabilitative Services, P.T.A., and

the state conference for the League of Middle Schools. The writer has been a member of the Education Advisory Board for a regional newspaper. The writer was selected as an Associate Master Teacher by the state merit teacher program.

Reason for Choice of Practicum

The program director for the Citizens Advisory Committee and the writer were exploring additional rehabilation programs that might be presented to the inmates at the Community Correctional Center. As the conversation progressed, the writer recalled a young student who had expressed her concerns and fears about her father returning after his imprisonment. There was very little that could be done to help her that day. But through this practicum, it was hoped that things might be better for other children as their fathers were released and returned to their families.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The Department of Corrections placed eligible inmates into Community Correctional Centers to assist them in participating in beneficial activities and reestablishing positive ties with family and friends before their releases. In speaking to Department of Corrections personnel, members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, and officials of the Public Defenders Office, it became apparent to the writer that the goal of the Department of Corrections was not being met.

There were several reasons for the failure of the system to provide the services necessary to achieve its goal. The limited time served in the program made extensive rehabilitation and counseling programs difficult to implement. Due to over-crowding in the state correctional system, the average time served was three months for every year of sentence. Men in the Community Correctional Centers at that time were spending from one to six months in the work release program. At the same time that the state legislature decreased the money that was

available for counseling and education within correctional facilities it was providing funds to build additional correctional facilities. As a result of this policy the state actually was moving farther from its stated goal.

At this Correctional Center there were no educational resources available to the inmates on the subjects of human growth and development, parenting skills, effective discipline, or related subjects. The Correctional Center's library was basically limited to fictional adventure books. The books in the library were obtained by donations from the inmates and their families.

The Community Correctional Center was not able to provide many of the programs that the Citizens Advisory Committee felt would be beneficial to the inmates' rehabilitation. The Community Correctional Center did not have the resources available for additional programs. Two local counselors had provided seminars in goal setting and self-actualization for interested inmates. But at that time, there were no courses or seminars on parenting available to inmates which might assist them in their transition back into the family unit.

Problem Documentation

In a personal interview, the vice president of the Citizens Advisory Committee noted problem areas in rehabilitation. The Citizens Advisory Committee proposed providing educational and support groups to help the

inmates make the transition back into their families and the community (Waters, 1989). These programs had not been possible up to that time because there had been no funds available. The Citizens Advisory Committee was looking for help from the community to achieve its goals.

A member of the support group for wives of inmates indicated that the members of the family support group expressed concern about the lack of appropriate parenting skills of the husbands or fathers in the Correctional Center (Doe, 1989).

The inmates at the Correctional Center were surveyed about their marital status, children, and families (Appendix A). There had not been courses or seminars at the Correctional Center that might have motivated the inmates to expand their reading interests. There was no money available for the Correctional Center to purchase books that might be of educational value. Space and staff constraints also precluded library expansion.

The Correctional Center was not able to provide many of the courses or seminars that might have been helpful to the inmates. The officals at the Correctional Center said that there was not enough space for improvements that would allow for classrooms. Money and manpower were not available for additional projects. At that point in time, members of the community had not seen the need to become involved in the inmates' rehabilitation. There were

indications that men incarcerated at the Correctional Center lacked appropriate parenting skills.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

There was no doubt that there had been an increase in crime in the United States. Jails and prisons were full. Prisoners were being released early to make room for new inmates.

Not much was known about the families of the men and women who were in the criminal justice system. Rosenkrantz and Joshua (1982) estimated that 75% of the female inmates had children under the age of 18. They estimated that the mothers of a quarter of a million children enter prison annually (Rosenkrantz & Joshua, 1982). In 1977 the Social Security Administration reported that 7.8 million families on Aid to Families with Dependent Children had fathers in the correctional system.

While the spouse and family were under great stress caused by the imprisonment of a family member, the children of inmates also had multiple problems caused by the incarceration of a parent. Lowenstein (1986) interviewed wives of inmates about the difficulties their children displayed and found that approximately 40% of the families had children who were experiencing emotional and interactional difficulties. The same research indicated that 20% of the mothers reported an increase in behavioral problems of their children.

The problems described by various authors fell into the three categories identified by Lowenstein (1986): physical and mental health, interactional relations, and behavioral problems. Fritch and Burkhead (1981) catagorized these behaviors as acting out and acting in or withdrawing. Some children of inmates manifested their frustration in aggressive ways (Sack, 1977; Fritsch and Burkhead, 1981; Lowenstein, 1986) such as: running away from home, theft, and fighting. Other children showed passive resistance (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Lowenstein, 1986) such as truancy, lower grades in school, day dreaming, and withdrawal. Key and Eyres (1987) stated that "many of these children's problems are typical ones of childhood and adolescence, but are exacerbated by the enforced separation from parent or parents" (p. 10).

There were those who felt that the criminal justice system should help strengthen the family ties of inmates. Bauhofer (1987) felt that the prison system should help inmates examine their family roles, make responsible decisions, and interact positively with their children. Kandle and Cassler (1968) boldly suggested that the decay of family ties while imprisoned might embitter prisoners and even be responsible for recidivism. There had been a few model programs established in the correctional system that dealt with parenting needs of inmates and the needs of their children. MATCH (Mothers And Their Children) was

sponsored by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency whose purpose was to strengthen the family ties of female inmates (Rosenkrantz & Joshua, 1982). SKIP (Support for Kids of Incarcerated Parents) provided counseling for children and improved parenting skills of many inmates involved in the program (Key & Eyres, 1987).

Hairston and Lockett (1987) described the "Parenting in Prison Program" implemented in the Tennessee State Penitentiary System. A unique aspect of this program was that it was designed for male inmates. The inmates worked to ensure better lives for their children and themselves. The inmates in the program participated in educational course work, support groups, and various activities that were designed to strengthen parenting skills (Hairston & Lockett, 1987).

The literature suggests that improving parenting skills of the inmates might be benefical for the inmate, his or her family and children, as well as society.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION OF GOALS

Goals and Objectives

The principal goal of this practicum was to ease the transition of the male inmate back into his family and his role as father. To obtain that goal the following secondary goals were proposed.

1) Seven to ten inmates would enroll in and complete each seminar consisting of four parenting workshops offered at the Correctional Center.

2) Resource books and materials relating to aspects of effective parenting, human growth and development, and other topics which concerned parents would be made available for inmate use.

3) The number of resources signed out by the inmates would be equal to or greater than the number of men enrolled in the seminars.

4) The participating inmates would develop a better understanding of topics chosen for the parenting workshops as demonstrated by self evaluation.

5) The workshops would provide useful information to the participating inmates which would be confirmed by an evaluation by the inmates at the end of each seminar.

Evaluation Instruments

To maintain the inmates' interest it was important that the seminars and their evaluations be as nonthreatening as possible. The intent of the writer was to expose the inmates to positive, nurturing, parenting concepts and techniques. For some, this exposure might have been a confirmation of their pre-existing ideas on parenting. For others, this may have been information that was quite different from their experiences as a child or parent.

Several commercial pre/post-evaluations were considered for use in documenting inmates' progress in the understanding of information, skills, and techniques that were presented in the seminars. The tests were rated by a content match to the curriculum, the amount of time required to administer, and the reading level. Three criteria for an appropriate pre/post-evaluation were considered. The evaluation should pertain to the subjects covered in the workshop. It should take fifteen minutes or less to administer. Finally, the test should be easily read and understood by the inmates. None of the evaluations reviewed met all three criteria. Therefore, pre- and post-evaluations were designed specifically to fulfill these requirements. The evaluations were intended to be nonthreatening to the inmates.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

There were several stategies that had been proposed to decrease the problems of inmates returning to their families unprepared to assume their roles as concerned, loving parents. Some of the strategies explored focused attention on the inmates, others on the inmate and the inmate's family. Many were focused on the families of inmates. All of these strategies recognized the potential for psychological and social problems related to the reunification of incarcerated persons with their families.

Conditions could be arranged so that family visitation would be made more frequently to help maintain family ties (Pueschel & Moglia, 1977). Financial support could be provided for wives and children of inmates to allow them to visit the correctional center, so that the inmate parents could see their families more frequently and participate more fully in family relationships (Bakker, Morris, & Janus, 1978). Housing could be made available to wives and children of inmates during visitations (Bakker, Morris, & Janus, 1978).

The center could provide a family room that would be conducive to the maintenance of family relationships (Key & Eyres, 1987). A parenting room supplied with toys and books could be provided for the use of inmates and their families during visitations (Rosenkrantz & Joshua, 1982). Quiet or napping areas could be provided for young children visiting (Bauhofer, 1987). Outside play areas could be provided at the Correctional Center for visiting children (Bakker, Morris, & Janus, 1978).

Educational and support programs could be provided to inmate parents. Parenting groups could be made available to the inmates to help ease the transition back into the family structure (Sametz, 1980). Discussion and support groups for parents who are inmates would be helpful (McCarthy, 1980). A parenting resource library could be made available to inmates to help increase their knowledge of child growth and parenting skills. Classroom courses could be offered which include: human growth and development, understanding relationships, stress management, and communication (Hairston & Lockett, 1987). Efforts could be made to improve cognitive skills of inmates (Ross, Fabiano, & Ewles, 1988).

Special activities could be provided to increase parenting skills and family involvement for the inmates as in the "Parenting in Prison" program sponsored by the Tennessee State Penal System (Hairston & Lockett, 1987).

In this project home study courses were provided. There was also a series of classroom courses. Monthly special speakers discussed topics related to parenting with rap sessions following to discuss the inmates' reactions. Special projects and events were scheduled that involved child welfare and positive family relationships.

Educational and support groups could be provided for the family members of inmates. Family counseling could be made available (Lowenstein, 1986). Support groups for children of inmates could be established, such as Support for Kids of Incarcerated Parents (SKIP) (Key & Eyres, 1987).

Greater inter-agency coordination could enable inmates and their families to receive assistance such as housing, counseling, and/or food stamps both during incarceration and after release (Hinds, 1981).

After discussion with the vice president of the Community Advisory Committee and consideration of available resources the writer determined that of all of the strategies studied, the development of both parenting groups and a parenting resource library would be the most efficacious for implementation at the Community Correctional Center. These strategies could be most easily controlled by the writer and would provide maximum impact upon the inmates with minimum change to the Community Correctional Center's administration and schedule. These

strategies could also be completed within a predetermined time frame.

Description of Selected Solution

The concept of parenting seminars was approved for the Community Correctional Center after presentation to the administration of the Center and to the Citizens Advisory Board. This presentation included the results of an interest survey (see Appendix D) that was administered to the inmates during a mandatory rehabilitation session and an outline of the procedures that were to be followed.

After the writer obtained approval to conduct the seminars at the Center, the inmates received information about the series and the first parenting seminar at a mandatory rehabilitation session. The inmates were then given an opportunity to ask questions about the parenting seminar and to register for the first seminar on the registration form (Appendix E). This procedure was followed for each of the three remaining seminars.

The curriculum for each seminar was determined by the interests of the inmates who wished to participate. The pre-evaluation form listed eleven parenting topics. The inmates were asked to check up to six topics that they felt might be beneficial to them personally. There was also space provided for other topics that were not listed. The curriculum varied slightly for the seminars due to the perceived needs of each group of inmates that registered

for the four seminars. Specific workshop topics for each seminar were determined by choosing the four topics checked most often on the pre-evaluation form.

To expand the availability of related materials, a resource workshop library was established. Several local doctors, hospitals, clinics, schools, and health organizations were asked to donate appropriate materials for the parenting resource library. Many additional books and magazines were obtained independently to cover as many topics on children and parenting as possible. Many of these resources were also used by the writer for reference in obtaining information and activities used for the workshops that were presented.

The administration set the times and dates for the workshops. Before the first workshop session, the inmates that registered were sent flyers to inform them of the time, dates, and topics that they chose for the seminar and to generate enthusiasm for attending.

At the beginning of the first seminar, a general parenting pre-evaluation (see Appendix B) was administered to the participants. The evaluation was read aloud and inmates were asked to respond to each question as it was read. This enabled inmates to ask questions for clarification and made it easier for inmates with lower reading levels to answer questions without additional assistance.

The inmates and the workshop leader were asked to tell the group the names and ages of their children. This enabled the group to share something about themselves in a nonthreatening way and get to know the others (including the leader) in a different way.

Each of the four weekly workshops in the parenting seminar was scheduled to last 90 minutes. This included time for the lecture, activities, questions, and answers. The resource library was available for checking out and returning materials before and after each workshop. Materials that were mentioned in the workshop were displayed prominently so the participants could examine them and check them out of the library. Although there was no stated limit, books and resources were usually kept for one week and returned at the next meeting. There was also a return box available in the conference room if the inmates chose to return the resources at any other time.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of Practicum Results

Over a year's time, four parenting seminars were offered to the inmates at the Community Correctional Center. Each seminar consisted of four workshops. Each workshop focused on one topic. The topics for the workshops were determined by a nonstandardized pre-evaluation on which the inmates indicated areas of need in their parenting skills knowledge.

A total of 32 inmates enrolled in the four seminars, although only 31 completed the seminars. Six inmates completed Seminar A, eight completed Seminar B, eight completed Seminar C, and nine of ten enrolled completed Seminar D.

The goal of inmate participation in the parenting seminars was obtained in all but the first seminar, which fell one person short of the minimum number projected. This might have been due to apprehension on the part of the inmates in committing to a series of four parenting workshops of which they and their fellow inmates had no prior knowledge or experience. It seemed that after some of the inmates had participated in the program there was

less apprehension on the part of other interested inmates to register for subsequent seminars. There were several inmates who would come by the conference room and listen while they waited for other activities to begin.

During the series of seminars the inmates chose the topics for each of the four workshops. Two topics, Family Relationships and Stress Management, were chosen by each of the four seminar groups of inmates. Two topics, Communication Skills and Children and School, were chosen by three of the seminar groups. Learning Problems and Health, Safety, and First Aid were each chosen by one seminar group.

Table 1

Workshop Topics Chosen for the Four Seminars

	Seminars			
Workshop Topics	A	B	C	D
Family Relationships	X	X	X	X
Stress Management	X	X	X	X
Communication Skills		X	X	X
Children and School	X	X		X
Learning Problems	X			
Health, Safety, and First Aid			X	

When appropriate, an effort was made to include information from topics not chosen that might enhance a session. In Seminar A some information on Communication Skills was included in the workshop on Family Relationships. An overview of Learning Problems was included in the workshops on Children and School. Since none of the groups chose the topic of Child Development in their four choices, the writer included this information during the Family Relationships workshops.

Analysis of the four seminar populations yielded significant information. In Seminar A only one man was currently married, four were single, and one was a widower. Five of the six men had children. The five fathers had a total of 17 children. As in the initial survey, the majority of the inmates had children while only a small number were currently married. Changes in the visitation and furlough policies were enforced during the summer of 1990. The changes limited visitors to direct relatives only. This made it impossible for many inmates' children to visit, since most inmates were not legally married to the mother of their children.

Of the eight inmates participating in Seminar B, four were single, and four were married. Seven of the men had a total of 12 children. There were eight men in Seminar C. Four were single, three married, and one divorced. Six of the men had a total of 15 children. Seminar D, the final

seminar, had nine inmates. There were six single men, one married man, and two men were divorced. Six of the men had a total of 17 children.

When the totals for all four seminars were considered there were 18 single men, 9 married men, two divorced men, and one widower. In the four seminars there were only seven men who attended that did not have children. The remaining 24 inmates who attended the seminars had a total of 60 children. When the seven inmates who had no children were asked why they were taking the parenting seminar, the answers fell into two categories. One response was that they hoped to have children some day. The other was that they wanted to learn something new.

The second goal was establishing a parenting resource library. The resource library that was developed and made available to the inmates contained 90 selections. These included: 30 books, 45 pamphlets, 12 articles, two multi-media kits, and one textbook. The resource library was used by the writer and the inmates. A complete list of the resources that were available are listed in Appendix F.

When the concept of a resource library was discussed with the center's officials, they seemed reluctant to allow books to be checked out by the inmates. Concern was expressed that inmates might be released or transferred and not return the items that were signed out. To allow for this possibility, a book return box was left in the

center's conference room. This would allow inmates to exchange or return books at their convenience. A selection of books, articles, and pamphlets was available at each workshop. The selection included titles that related to the current workshop topic and special items for inmates who expressed specific interests.

Although inmates perused the available books, they only signed out pamphlets and articles. Of the 90 titles available only 12 titles were checked out or taken by the inmates. These resources are listed separately in Appendix G. The two titles by Dinkmeyer were both booklets from a parenting series. They were both signed out by the same inmate.

There were three pamphlets on stress that included written permission for multiple copying of the materials. Thiry-six copies of each of these titles were distributed. This included four copies to Correctional Center staff members who had heard the presentation and requested the materials. All 32 participants in the Family Relationships workshops received copies of a pamphlet on raising children, which also contained written permission for copying and distribution. Similarly, the eight participants in the Health, First Aid, and Safety workshop were given copies of a pamphlet about AIDS. There were ten copies of a pamphlet dealing with hyperactivity distributed at the workshops on Learning Problems and Children and

School. There were four different articles checked out and returned. One article was checked out three times. Two articles were checked out twice. One article was checked out once.

This made a total of 156 resources that were distributed to the inmates. Ten of these were materials that had to be returned to the resource library. The inmates were allowed to keep the remaining resources. The inmates seemed to prefer the resources that were available in multiple photocopies. These resources (all of which were permitted to be copied) are noted by an asterisk at the end of the entry in Appendix F. When these were available, every inmate present took a copy. It appeared that the inmates preferred these because they could keep them and share items. The sharing of information was encouraged. Occasionally they would ask for extra copies to send home.

Since the resources in the library were the main source of information which the writer included in each workshop, the participants received information from many resources that they did not choose to check out or read themselves.

The inmates were requested to do a self-evaluation after the last workshop of each seminar. They were asked to consider two questions. The first question was a rating of how useful the presented information was to them

personally. The second question was whether they would apply any of the techniques, procedures, or information that they had learned in the seminar after they were released. The inmates' responses were very positive.

The results of the seminar post-evaluations are listed by seminar in Appendix H. The following is a summary of the information from those post-evaluations. All four seminars had Family Relationships as a workshop topic. Of the 31 inmates that attended this workshop 29 felt that the information was very useful to them and that they would use the information and skills when they were released. One inmate thought the information would probably be useful and that he would use the information and skills. One inmate thought the information on Family Relationships would be of little use to him and that he would not use any of the skills or information presented.

Stress Management was also chosen for presentation in all four seminars. In post-evaluation 26 inmates thought the information and skills would be very useful, two rated the information as useful, and one thought the workshop information would be of some use. Two inmates thought the skills and techniques would be of no use to them. When asked if they planned to use the skills and techniques demonstrated, 29 indicated yes, two indicated maybe, and two indicated no.

The workshop on Children and School was chosen for

presentation at three seminars. A total of 23 inmates were present at these workshops. Nineteen rated the information as very useful and four as useful. All 23 men indicated that they would use the information that was presented.

Communication Skills was a workshop topic at three seminars. There was a total of 25 inmates in these workshops. Of the 25, 21 indicated the information would be very useful to them while four indicated that the information would be useful. All 25 men indicated that they would use the information presented in the Communication Skills workshop.

Learning Problems was a workshop topic at Seminar A only. All six inmates found the information very useful and indicated that they would use the information presented.

Health, Safety, and First Aid was also a workshop topic at only one seminar. Eight inmates attended this workshop. All the men rated the information as very useful to them personally and indicated that they would use the information and skills when they were released.

Conclusions

The inmates were receptive to the parenting seminars. Their comments on the post-evaluations were very positive. Some indicated that the materials were well-presented and interesting. Several indicated that they enjoyed the discussions and the relaxing atmosphere. Most of the

inmates indicated that there was nothing that they would like to see changed. Two specific suggestions for change were to present the workshops on a different day and to make the workshops more spiritual.

The nonthreatening atmosphere that was encouraged seemed to be successful. All but one inmate who registered completed the seminars. This specific inmate was transferred to a higher security facility within the state correction system. The men had no demands made upon them other than to attend, listen, and participate. The writer feels that requiring extensive testing of specific knowledge would have discouraged many inmates from completing the series of seminars.

The inmates used some of the materials that were available in the resource library, as documented in Appendix G, to the exclusion of other materials. The writer feels that although all the materials provided in the resource library were relevant, the inmates were reluctant to sign out materials that appeared lengthier than others or that had a more challenging reading level. Gathering or developing more parenting materials that were shorter in length or that could be photocopied would probably increase the variety of titles actually taken by the inmates. As the collection of materials for the resource library was extensive, it is entirely possible that such materials are not in print.

The evaluations given allowed the participants to respond anonymously, if they wished, which reinforced the nonthreatening atmosphere of the seminars and encouraged honest responses from the participants. The fact that most chose to identify their evaluations might indicate that most of the inmates in the seminars were not reluctant to share their opinions. The participants' input was valued as workshop curriculum was developed and revised.

While the results of the post evaluations were very positive, there were several informal observations that would indicate greater benefits to the inmates. Before each workshop inmates would arrive early to help display materials and arrange the room. During this time inmates felt free to talk about their children, the problems their family might be facing, or just to brag about their children. Sometimes the inmates would share their concerns during the question and answer period at the end of the workshops. When inmates shared concerns or raised questions the group was always supportive. Sometimes the other men would relate similar experiences or offer solutions. At other times they would just listen. The fact that they were not with their children gave many inmates a feeling of helplessness as indicated by their questions and comments. During those times the inmates received suggestions for maintaining or reestablishing relationships with their children. After the workshops

were formally concluded for the evening, one or two inmates would help straighten the room and assist in putting away materials used that evening. The writer stayed as long as the inmates cared to talk. Inmates from prior workshops would come by to share a new victory or voice a concern. These informal moments helped to underscore the writer's perception that the inmates were in need of guidance and counseling in these matters and that the workshops helped to meet that need.

Recommendations

The writer was concerned about the schedule that was followed for each of the four parenting seminars. The night administrator of the Community Correctional Center set the schedule for the seminars. The schedule was often in conflict with other programs that were available to the inmates. The writer feels that there might have been greater participation in the program if the inmates had greater input as to the time and days that the seminars would be conducted.

Another possibility would be a monthly meeting with open participation. This might be of greater interest to inmates who were reluctant to commit one evening a week for four weeks. These meetings could be announced several weeks in advance with the topics listed. It might be more effective to have each inmate receive an information flyer the week of the open workshop. By combining information

from several areas the curriculum could be limited to six topics for one-hour workshops with time allotted for discussion before and after each session.

The open seating that was made available at the center did not allow the inmates a writing surface on which to easily participate in any paper and pencil tasks. This problem could be eliminated if workshops were held in the dining room.

If permission could be gained, it might be better to leave a permanent collection of parenting materials that would be available to the inmates and their families. This would have the potential of increasing the availability and use of the resources. Maintenance of such a collection would probably necessitate contributions of money and/or materials from outside sources. This could also be accomplished by obtaining a grant to provide the appropriate materials. A permanent collection would allow information to be available for inmates to choose and read at their leisure. Such materials could be borrowed and returned or kept by the inmates. Materials not returned would be replenished as necessary.

As previously indicated, the writer recognizes a deficiency in available, appropriate, parenting resources which are written at low readability levels. The development and inclusion of such materials in the resource library would increase the potential benefit of these

written resources to the inmates. Multi-media kits and videotapes on parenting would also be beneficial to inmates.

It is the recommendation of the writer that the parenting workshops continue, incorporating the modifications already discussed, using local experts to supplement the lecture staff. One person could coordinate the workshops with other existing programs to expand the rehabilitation efforts at the Community Correctional Center.

The writer feels that a positive impact has been made upon the inmates who participated in the program and that the writer's knowledge, understanding, and attitude regarding the state correctional system has been greatly enhanced. The writer believes that this practicum has become a part of, and a model for, an increased community involvement in the rehabilitation of prisoners. Such community involvement may be the keystone of a new and more successful program of rehabilitation.

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APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY SURVEY

PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Date _____

Current marital status: married divorced widower single

How many children do you have? _____

How many do you have in each of the following age ranges?

0-2 years old _____ 11-13 years old _____

2-4 years old _____ 14-17 years old _____

5-7 years old _____ 18-21 years old _____

8-10 years old_____ over 21 years old _____

Do any of your children have physical handicaps? yes no

If yes, what handicapping condition? _____

Have any of your children been in special education classes?

yes no not sure

If yes, what classifications: hearing impaired EMH

learning disabled physically handicapped TMH

visually impaired emotionally handicapped not sure

Did you ever attend special education classes when you were in school?

yes no not sure

If yes, what classification: hearing impaired EMH

learning disabled physically handicapped TMH

visually impaired emotionally handicapped not sure

Do you feel a seminar in parenting would help your relationship with your children now or upon your release?

yes no maybe

Would you be interested in attending a parenting seminar if it was available at the center?

yes no maybe

APPENDIX B

PRE-EVALUATION

PRE-EVALUATION

When you think about being a parent, what information or skills do you think might help you be a better parent? What topics would you like more information about?

Please check up to six topics that you feel might help you. You may add topics that are of interest to you that are not listed.

I need more information about:

_____ Growth and Development of Children

_____ Health, Safety, and First Aid

_____ Communication Skills

_____ Stress Management

_____ Effective Parenting Skills

_____ Learning Problems

_____ Understanding Family Relationships

_____ Effective Discipline Practices

_____ What Can I Do Now?

_____ Where Do I Begin When I Get Home?

_____ How Can I Help My Child At School?

_____ _____

_____ _____

APPENDIX C

POST-EVALUATION

POST-EVALUATION

Please rate the information presented in each session as to how well it met your parenting needs.

WORKSHOP	Very Useful	Useful	Some Use	Little Use	No Use
Title One	5	4	3	2	1
Title Two	5	4	3	2	1
Title Three	5	4	3	2	1
Title Four	5	4	3	2	1
Total Seminar	5	4	3	2	1

Will the information and skills gained in any of the workshops you attended be used by you?

WORKSHOP			
Title One	yes	maybe	no
Title Two	yes	maybe	no
Title Three	yes	maybe	no
Title Four	yes	maybe	no

What did you like best about the seminar?

Other comments:

APPENDIX D

RESULTS OF INTEREST SURVEY

RESULTS OF INTEREST SURVEY

CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER RESPONDING	INTEREST IN SEMINAR Yes	Maybe	No	No Response	TOTAL CHILDREN
Single						
No Children	13	0	2	11	0	
With Children	17	4	9	3	1	32
Married						
No Children	0	0	0	0	0	
With Children	13	2	4	7	0	37
Divorced						
No Children	7	2	1	3	1	
With Children	6	3	1	2	0	16
Widowed						
No Children	0	0	0	0	0	
With Children	1	0	1	0	0	3
Unclassified						
No Children	1	1	0	0	0	
With Children	11	3	1	7	0	18
Totals						
No Children	21	3	3	14	0	
With Children	48	12	16	19	2	106
TOTAL	69	15	19	33	2	106

APPENDIX E

REGISTRATION FORM

PARENTING SEMINAR REGISTRATION

The Parenting Seminar will have four weekly workshops. The topics will be chosen from the areas of need marked on the Parenting Pre-Evaluation. To provide a more meaningful experience, it would be helpful to know some general information about you and your family.

Name: _____

Marital Status: (please circle one)

single married divorced widowed

How many children do you have? _____

What are the ages of your children?

APPENDIX F

RESOURCE LIBRARY

RESOURCE LIBRARY

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Chapter 9	Communication of love	p. 173-185
Chapter 15	Establishing your family	p. 290-315
Chapter 16	Your new baby	p. 316-359
Chapter 17	Crisis in the family	p. 360-380

APPENDIX G

DOCUMENTATION OF RESOURCE USE

DOCUMENTATION OF RESOURCE USE

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APPENDIX H

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF POST-EVALUATION

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF POST-EVALUATION

WORKSHOP	USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION			APPLICATION OF SKILLS	
	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Yes	No
Family Relationships					
Seminar					
A	6	0	0	6	0
B	7	1	0	8	0
C	8	0	0	8	0
D	8	0	1	8	1
Stress Management					
Seminar					
A	5	1	0	5	1
B	7	1	0	8	0
C	8	0	0	8	0
D	6	1	2	6	3
Children and School					
Seminar					
A	6	0	0	6	0
B	5	3	0	8	0
D	8	1	0	9	0
Communication Skills					
Seminar					
B	5	3	0	8	0
C	8	0	0	8	0
D	8	1	0	9	0
Learning Problems					
Seminar					
A	6	0	0	6	0
Health, Safety, and First Aid					
Seminar					
C	8	0	0	8	0